

On Shared Leadership

“... maximizing team effectiveness through collaborative influence and shared values”



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What do organisations need?

Times are different. Organisations have passed mass and brute labour, through mechanical systems, to a truly knowledge entity. People are the backbone of this 'new organisation' and demands on them at all levels are changing. People and Organisational Development (POD) models and interventions as championed by organisations such as Victor and Victors are designed to provide insights and value through the core elements of OD practice. V&V's Best You, Better X (BYB-X) programme moves beyond the traditional lump-sum treatment of 'people-as-a-team' to creating the necessary enabling conditions in every organisation for each person to be their best potentials – leaders, followers, influencers, etc. Leadership is quintessential to this. Let us explore one particular emergent strand - Shared Leadership in this *OD Insights* paper.



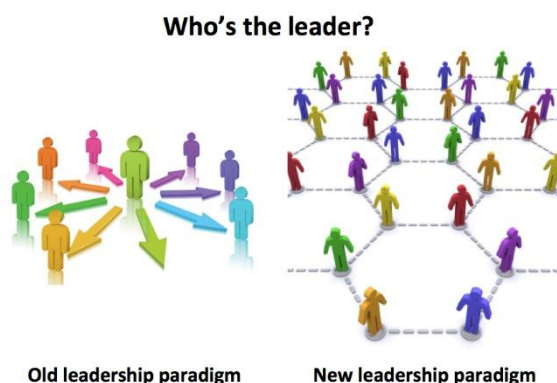
Central Theme – Values, Goals and Results

Shared vision results in program coherence, roles and actions reflect broad involvement, communication, collaboration, and collective responsibility, reflective practice consistently leads to high self-esteem teams and to innovation ... these are key elements necessary to pass the Shared Leadership test for any institution. Leadership, as part of the overall Organisational Development (OD) elements, is essential because it is the binding agent between the systems, processes, structures and the key element in every organisation – people.

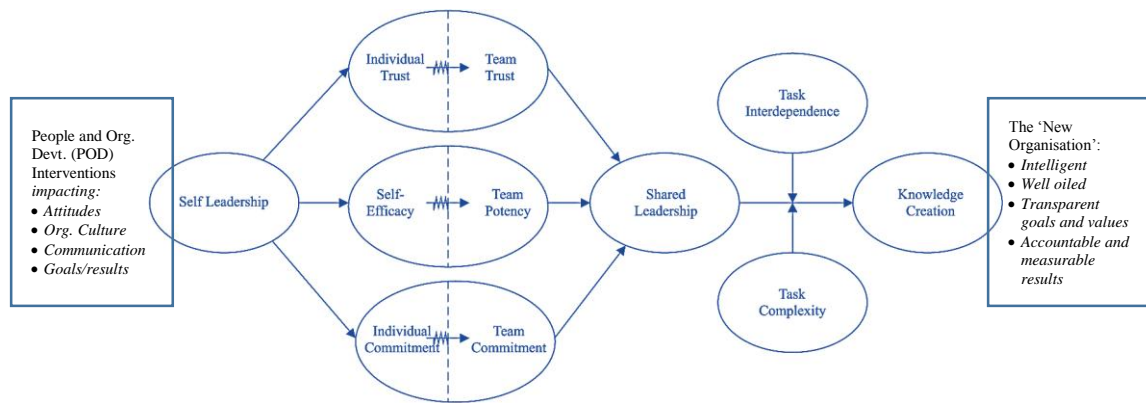
Shared leadership is leadership that is broadly distributed, such that people within a team and organization lead each other. It is a dynamic, interactive influence process among individuals and groups for which the objective is to lead one another to the achievement of group or organizational goals or both. It results in highly effective and efficient people in the organisation. Teams become self-managed and this allows the members of a work team to manage, control, and monitor all facets of their work. In this,

- members assume personal responsibility and accountability for outcomes of their work.
- members monitor their own performance and seek feedback on how well they are accomplishing their goals.
- members manage their performance and take corrective action when necessary to improve their and the performance of other group members.
- members help others in their work group and colleagues in other groups to improve job performance and raise productivity for the organization as a whole.

Traditional leadership is conceived around a single individual – the leader – and how that person inspires, entices, commands, cajoles, coaxes, and controls followers. It was vertical and influence/power usually came from top-down. It is frequently compared to horizontal leadership, distributed leadership, matrix leadership, co-leadership, collective leadership and is most contrasted with more traditional "vertical" or "hierarchical" leadership which resides predominantly with an individual instead of a group.



Shared leadership can be defined in a number of ways, but all definitions describe a similar phenomenon – team leadership by more than only the appointed leader. Nearly all concepts of shared leadership entail the practice of "broadly sharing power and influence among a set of individuals rather than centralizing it in the hands of a single individual who acts in the clear role of a dominant superior



Measuring shared leadership

Achieving a shared leadership result in an organisation must start with knowing how it will be measured. Ratings of the team's collective leadership behaviour (shared accountability and ownership of expected outcomes) and Social Network Analysis (who needs to relate with who and who is relating with who) are common measures of shared leadership in an organisation. A more structured technique of measuring shared leadership is with the use of Behaviourally Anchored Rating Scales and related OD assessments.

The next step after beginning with the end in mind will be to understand the process and key elements. Our suggested process in the model above is to always start with the individuals. An organisation, no matter how automated, depends cardinally on its people. An interrelated series of assessments and interventions must target the members (individuals) to be at their best potentials – technical and soft skills. This will lead to *self leadership*. Self Leadership results in self efficacy, increased passion for work, individual commitment, and trust (in themselves and others). These naturally (and with minimal interventions), impact positively on the teams (or sub-teams or SBUs). The resultant team trust, increased potency and commitment begets shared leadership. Achieving shared leadership is a critical step in the overall OD process. Being a key element, results from related OD interventions add results such as increased task interdependence, increasing complexity of tasks demanded by members, etc. This results in a *knowledge organisation*, or better still, an *intelligent organisation*, that is well primed for achievement of shared outcomes.

Shared leadership is about creating the necessary **environment** to achieve a better team. Firstly, team members must be willing and comfortable about being very open in work to their colleagues. They must be ready to *better communicate* - provide and receive continuous and multi-directional feedback from other members. They must then be willing to receive *coaching* and guidance from multiple colleagues. In simple terms, every team member needs to be a good follower, team player, sceptic, and leader.

It is about employing interventions to help achieve:

- **Shared purpose:** with team members having a similar understanding of their team's main objectives and taking steps to ensure a focus on collective goals.
- **Social network:** team members actively providing emotional and psychological strength to one another.
- **Shared Expression:** the degree to which a team's members have input into how the team carries out its purpose.

By 'shared leadership' we mean: using interventions, such as actions, tools and activities, that are aimed at whole teams and distributing leadership responsibilities across the team.

It may be time for you as leader, and your team to start considering the benefits of Shared Leadership and implementing targeted OD interventions to get the desired results. Talk to an OD practitioner now.

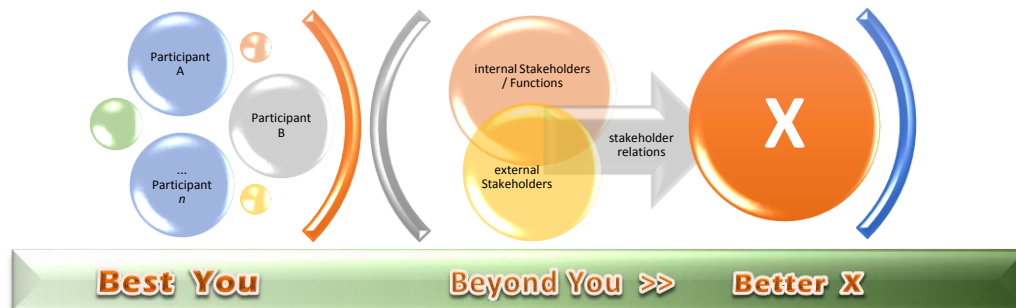
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Best You, Better X (BYB-X)

Organisational Development (OD) helps organizations deliver sustainable performance improvement through people. BYB-X is our core OD model. We are all the sum of different elements. If indeed, LIFE is a stage and we are all merely players in it, then organisations, associations, communities, countries, and any situation that involves people is eventually a sum of the nature, perceptions, emotions, abilities, preferences ... in short, the personality of its players. BYB-X works around the principle that organisations can ONLY become better IF their 'players' are operating at their best capabilities. This principle works in all scenarios and the 'X' denoting various organisations, communities, committees, associations, situations, etc. and has no real limit. *Best You, Better – X (BYB-X)* model of V&V opines that better organisations can only come about as a result of its people being at their best potential. If the greatest assets of any organisation (X) are its people, then the need to identify the right people with the necessary capabilities or developing the existing membership to unlock and develop the vast human potentials within the organisation is key. V&V combines the application of tools such as Clarity4D™® and GROW to custom-design and deliver BYB-X for valued clients.

BYB-X Format

The general BYB-X model may be employed for several OD interventions – team building, leadership, org. culture, etc. Three main parts will be outlined for easy comprehension by participants – *Best You*, *Beyond You*, and *Better X*. The rationale for these parts is to ensure that participants get a better understanding of themselves, strengths and potentials first. This will be followed by several sessions to encourage participants to move beyond thinking of themselves to others within their circles (at work, home, etc).



The lessons from the *Beyond You* parts will then be applied specifically to how it can make work and relations among sub teams better. Emphasis will be placed on making members realise that ultimately, making relations and work better, was the objective for the intervention.

About Victor and Victors

Victor and Victors (V&V) is a management consulting organisation working with key contacts in companies to design and provide needed, high quality, customised services at the right time. Our focus is on assignments/projects with a bias on People and Organisational Development. Through the Victors Consultancy Network (VCN) our accredited advisors, independent consultants, members and affiliate consultancy organisations provide solutions in Ideation and Change Management, Corporate Strategy Development, ICTs and MIS Solutions, Business Development Services (BDS) for SMEs, and Personal and Team building solutions. We have designed and delivered a number of OD interventions to organisations such as the Head of State Awards Ghana; Abt Associates US and DFID Funded Projects in Zambia, United Nations Zambia Coordination Office, Nigeria High Commission, UNDP/Global Fund Programmes in Zambia; Abuja Enterprise Agency (AEA), National University of Lesotho, etc.

About the Author



Mr Victor P.K. Mensah is an OD practitioner, Coach, Facilitator, a Chartered Manager and a senior consultant for Victor and Victors Management Services in Africa. He has consulted for/with several organisations including the Commonwealth of Learning (CoL Canada), UNDP Zambia, Min. of Gender in Lesotho, WikiEducator Foundation (New Zealand), among others. He is certified trainer in a number of tools for the International Labour Organisation (ILO), Clarity4D, DanteFactor, and the Commonwealth Secretariat. He can be reached on pk@vandvictors.com

